free imports of vanaspathi from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan as preferential treatment is given to these countries against local manufactures;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken on the demand;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As far as import of vanaspati from Nepal and Sri Lanka is concerned, the Government had set up an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) under the Chairmanship of Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Department of Commerce, to look into issues raised by the domestic vanaspati producers. The IMG has given its recommendations but no decisions have been taken on them. In case of Bhutan, it has been informed that the Government of Bhutan has raised import duty on Crude Palm Oil (CPO), input used in making vanaspati to 100% and hence export of vanaspati from Bhutan to India has become economically unviable.

Implementation of New Weapons Procurement Policy

334. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is willing to implement new weapons procurement policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that 54 percent of procurements in the last fiscal year from other countries shows that even after over 57 years of Independence, cutting edge technologies have not been developed in the country; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Capital acquisitions including acquisition of weapons are carried out in accordance with Defence Procurement Procedure 2005 which came into effect from 1.7.2005. This document lays down the procedure for the

acquisition of capital items for the Armed Forces. It includes the procedure for the acquisition of capital items for the Armed Forces. It includes the procedure relating to the formulation of Services' Qualitative Requirement, Acceptance of Necessity, Solicitation of techno-commercial offers, Evaluation of offers, Commercial negotiations, approval of Competent Financial Authority.

(c) and (d) In 2004-2005, about 54 percent of Capital acquisitions were made through imports. Import option is exercised only when it is absolutely necessary to procure the items within a definite time frame on operational grounds to bridge the capability gaps and when such equipment cannot be sourced indigenously. However, Government is taking all necessary steps to encourage and develop the indigenous capability to design and manufacture sophisticated defence items. Substantial achievements have been made by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) in many high technology areas such as Aeronautics, Missiles, Electronic Warfare, Advance Composites, etc.

MiG Crashes

335. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in view of large number of MiG 21 crashes, they have been described as "flying coffins";

(b) if so, what is the number of MiG 21 planes that have crashed so far; and

(c) whether Government propose to review their continuance for Defence purposes?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Due to a spate of accidents in 2002-2002, the term 'Flying Coffin' was coined by a section of the media.

(b) Out of a total number of seven hundred and ninety three (793) MiG-21 aircraft which have been inducted in the Indian Air Force (IAF) since 1963, the IAF has lost three hundred and thirty (330) MiG-21 aircraft in the accidents.